

men's flesh and blood, and ben man-quellers, as God com-plaineth by his prophets.' ¹ Wycliffe was one of the very few men who could see both the rights of the lords and the wrongs of the peasants. This large view of the social problems of the day enabled him, immediately after the rising was over, to speak of that astounding event with great moderation and breadth of view. At a time when all the upper classes thought of nothing but revenge, he had the courage to make the characteristic proposal that the Church property should be given to the secular lords, in order to enable them at once to relieve the poor of the burdens that had caused the outbreak.²

The general tone of the rising was that of Christian Democracy. The chief agitator who had spread discontent and formulated the theories of rebellion was a priest, and friars and Lollards alike were accused, with more or less truth, of carrying on Ball's work. In the Rising itself, several parsons of poor parishes put themselves at the head of their congregations and revenged on society the wrongs that they had endured. But the vast majority of the actual leaders were not men of the Church. Those who called out their neighbours in the villages and towns of England, when the Rising was well on foot, were generally laymen. So were those who, during the early summer of '81, went round from county to county preparing the rebellion.³

The plans and methods of these organisers are still obscure, but the general type is clear. There is no reason to find, as some have found, cause for wonder in the simultaneous revolt of so many districts. The rising was not, in fact, everywhere simultaneous ; but, on the other hand, it had been planned long before. The leaders were in the habit of meeting in London, where they were in touch with the proletariat of the great city. Some of the aldermen and better sort of citizens were also in their counsels.⁴ Trusting to the strength of these forces to open the gates of the capital, they determined to summon the men of the home counties from north and south

¹ Matt., 233-4. ² *De Bias.*, cap. xiii. 199.

* Powell, *passim*; *C. B. R., Anc. Ind.*, *passim*.

⁴ Froiss., ii. 461; Knighton, i. L 132, line 20 ; *C. B. R.*, 488, Bex. vi. (B6v. 190).